



TARGET ACCESS



TARGET Access

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You're Hired! Success Knows No Limitations!

U.S. Secretary of Labor Elaine L. Chao has selected "*You're Hired! Success Knows No Limitations!*" as the official theme for October's National Disability Employment Awareness Month.

"The theme, '*You're Hired! Success Knows No Limitations!*' emphasizes one of President George Bush's top priorities—economic opportunity through job creation," said Secretary Chao. "It also builds upon the accomplishments of the

president's *New Freedom Initiative* which has created many opportunities for persons with disabilities to be fully included in the 21st Century workforce."

This issue of *TARGET Access* offers a variety of disability resources aimed at increasing and facilitating the hiring of people with disabilities. In addition, this newsletter provides resources for current employees with disabilities.

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You're Hired! continued...

Creating Opportunities

In order to create opportunities and assist in the hiring of persons with disabilities, many government agencies maintain federal disability resource centers such as the USDA TARGET Center. The USDA TARGET Center provides a variety of technological and intellectual resources aimed at assisting individual agencies in providing reasonable accommodations to these employees. In 2002, the [USDA/CAP Partnership](#) was formed to provide a majority of these accommodations to USDA employees with a qualified disability at no charge to the agency.

What are qualified individuals with disabilities and reasonable accommodations?

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 is a federal law that protects *qualified* individuals from discrimination based on their disability. The nondiscrimination requirements of the law apply to employers and organizations that receive financial assistance from any federal department or agency, including the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Under this law, ***individuals with disabilities*** are defined as persons with a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities.

Major life activities include: caring for one's self, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, working, performing manual tasks, and learning. Some examples of impairments which may substantially limit major life activities, even with the help of medication or aids/devices, are: AIDS, alcoholism, blindness or visual impairment, cancer, deafness or hearing impairment, diabetes, drug addiction, heart disease, and mental illness.

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Recommended Disability Resources

www.dol.gov/odep

The Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy provides policy analysis, technical assistance, development of innovative practices and strategies, and education and outreach to employers, employees and the disability community.

www.opm.gov/disability

Federal disability resource providing better understanding of how to hire and retain persons with disabilities.

www.ican.com

A one-stop resource for information, guidance, conversation and companionship for the disability community.

www.disabilityinfo.gov

Disabilityinfo.org is a directory of government Web links relevant to people with disabilities, their families, employers, service providers and other community members.

www.section508.gov

This site offers resources for understanding and implementing the requirements of Section 508.

www.eeoc.gov

The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission works towards the elimination of illegal discrimination from the workplace. Information on laws, complaints, training and outreach is available at this site.

www.projectaction.easter-seals.org

Resources, training and technical assistance information from Easter Seals' Project ACTION, a research and demonstration project to improve access to public transportation for people with disabilities, is offered on this site.

For a full list of disability resources, please visit www.usda.gov/oo/target/relsites.html.

Tips for Managers : Hiring People with Disabilities

With an increased focus on hiring people with disabilities, hiring managers should be aware of proper interviewing techniques during the recruitment process. For example, many managers do not know whether or not a potential employee has to inform them of a disability, or whether or not they need to provide an accommodation for each employee. Preparing managers to handle concerns and misconceptions about hiring a person with a disability not only facilitates the hiring process but also increases the applicant pool. The following are a selection of helpful tips from various disability resources:

A person does not have to disclose that they have a disability to a potential employer. An employer cannot ask the applicant about their disability unless it relates to the ability to perform the essential duties of the job. If a person with a disability does not disclose during the interview that he/she has a disability, and the employer later finds out that the employee cannot perform one of the essential duties of the job, the employer should first attempt to accommodate the person to increase productivity. If the employee still cannot perform the essential duty, the employer would have to consider whether to keep them on or fire them, *just as a manager would with anyone else who could not perform the duties of the job.*

A potential employer can ask the applicant what accommodations are needed during the interview process. However, employers may not always be aware if an applicant has a disability unless they disclose it. If a manager thinks that a person might have a disability, he/she may ask the applicant what his/her accommodation needs are. If it appears that a person's disability inhibits performance of a job, focus on *how* the person can perform the job.

Employers should not feel that they have to hire someone who is not qualified for the position just because they have a disability. The candidate (with reasonable accommodations) either has the skills and qualifications, or does not, regardless of disability.

Make sure applications and forms do not ask disability-related questions and that they are accessible to all persons with disabilities. This includes alternate formats such as large print, Braille, accessible PDF and audio description.

Provide an interpreter for interviewees upon request. Some interviewees may lip-read, so look directly at him or her. Speak expressively, but do not shout. Most people who are deaf use interpreters and sign in American Sign Language (ASL). This is not the only version of sign language. When scheduling an interpreter for a non-English speaking person, be certain to retain an interpreter that speaks and interprets in the language of the person. For more information on USDA Interpreting Services visit the [TARGET Web site](#) or call 202-720-3515 (v/tty).

Accommodating an employee is not costly. According to the Job Accommodation Network, 80 percent of all job accommodations cost less than \$500. In the USDA, many reasonable accommodations are covered at no cost to the agency through the USDA/CAP (Computer/Electronic Accommodations Program) Partnership. For more information, visit the [TARGET Web site](#) or call 202-720-2600 (v/tty).

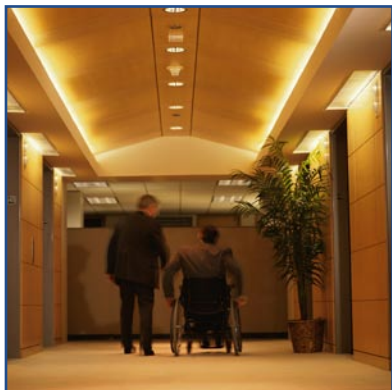


You're Hired! continued...

For the purposes of employment, ***qualified individuals with disabilities*** are persons who, with reasonable accommodation, can perform the essential functions of the job for which they have applied or have been hired to perform.

Reasonable accommodation means an employer is required to take reasonable steps to accommodate the person with a disability unless it would cause the employer undue hardship. Basically, unless the cost is prohibitive, federal agencies must do all they can to provide a work environment that levels the playing field and allows qualified employees with disabilities to do the job. If the accommodation is cost prohibitive, it must be proven to represent an undue burden.

For more information regarding hiring persons with disabilities, contact the USDA TARGET Center at 202-720-2600 (v/tty) or email target-center@usda.gov.



NDEA Month Events

USDA NDEA Month Opening Ceremony

October 5th, 10:00 am

Patio, Whitten Building

Workshop: 1:00 pm – 2:30 pm, Room 107-A

“Do Disabilities Disable You? Strategies to Remove Roadblocks from Your Path to Success.”

Workshop for Employees with Disabilities:

Fireproofing Your Career

October 6th, 9:00 am – 12:00 pm

Riverdale, MD

October 12th, 9:00 am - 12:00 pm

Room 107-A, Whitten Building

USDA TARGET Center Customer Appreciation Day

October 19th, 9:00 am – 3:00 pm

Room 1006-South

. For more information, visit the [TARGET Web site](#).

To participate, registration is required.

*Please contact 202-720-2600 (v/tty)
to reserve your spot.*

National “Disability Mentoring Day: Career Development for the 21st Century”

October 20th

Disability Mentoring Day (DMD) is designed to enhance internship and employment opportunities for people with disabilities by bringing them together with employers for a day of job shadowing and other hands-on career exploration activities.

*For additional information,
please visit the [Disability Mentoring Day Web site](#).*

Association for Persons with Disabilities in Agriculture, Super Supervisor Awards

October 27th

*Please visit our web site for more information
and a complete listing of disability related events.*



Helping People. It's What We Do.

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